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ABSTRACT

This practicum attempted to increase interpersonal skills and academic competence of 14 high school students with emotional handicaps through use of peer tutoring. The 17 high school seniors selected as peer assistors received training prior to program implementation. Peer assistors were required to identify goals and strategies weekly, work with their assigned student three times a week, keep a diary, and complete forms recording student progress. Highly positive results were found for tutees in the areas of attendance, reduction in use of inappropriate language, completion of class assignments, academic grades, interactions with peers, independent contacts with peers, number of negative behaviors, and discipline referrals. Peer assistors also gained in their understanding of disabilities and their ability to develop goals and objectives. Teachers in mainstream classes reported significant changes in tutee academic performance and behavior. Thirteen appendices provide the various forms, checklists, and surveys used in the study. (70 references) (DB)

Increasing Affective and Academic Performance of Ninth Grade Emotionally Handicapped Students Through a Peer Assistance Team Program

by

Barry W. Birnbaum

Cluster 30

A Practicum II Report
presented to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

August, 1990

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Approved:

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Date of Final Approval
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This practicum is dedicated to the memory of my parents.

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ABSTRACT

Increasing Affective and Academic Performance of High School Special Education Students Through a Peer Assistance Team program.
Birnbaum, Barry W., 1990: Practicum II Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.
Descriptors: Peer/Peer Tutors/Tutors/Peer Counseling/ Peer Assisted Learning/Special Education/Secondary Education/ Peer Assistance Team.

This practicum was designed to increase the effective skills and academic competence of students enrolled in a high school program for exceptional student education. Dropout prevention was also addressed as a possible result of no intervention.

The writer developed and administered a needs survey which documented that students were unable to develop effective relationships outside of the the ESE classroom. Parents were also asked to complete a survey identifying social interactions of their children while at home. Teachers were asked to complete a survey indicating the number of ESE students who were passing their classes and the interactions with other studerts that were noticed.

Peers were selected from the general population of the school. These peers had to meet certain criteria to be eligible to participate in this program. Peers were assigned to an ESE student based on the completion of a questionnaire. The writer of this study made the matches. Peers were trained to work with students both in the academic and affective realms. Peers met with the writer weekly and completed forms indicating achievements made on a weekly basis.

The results of this practicum indicated that peer tutoring has a positive impact upon the affective and academic achievement of high school students. Analysis of the data revealed that students were able to make gains in school and that these students were able to improve their self-concept and attitude towards school. The data also showed that students who were considering leaving school were more inclined to reconsider their decision.

The data also found that peer assistors also gained much knowledge in their understanding that a wide range of student abilities can be found in the educational system. The peers also were able to develop goals and objectives for their students as well as themselves.

Teachers in mainstream classes reported significant changes in the performance of the ESE student. Also, discipline referrals and attendance problems were reduced as a direct implication of this study.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The community for this study was located in an upper middle class area. Most of the students came from homes where both parents worked in a professional capacity and are college educated. These parents took an active involvement with their children's education and were an integral part in the function of their community. Parents were eager to aid in planning their children's academic needs and they were highly motivated to impact their children positively.

Many of the young people in this area attended private schools. Those students in the public school setting, however, scored at the top of norms on standardized tests and college entrance examinations. In addition, these students qualified for most academic awards in preparation for college.

The school setting where this study took place had a student population of 1,425 and a faculty of 102. A support staff of 17, including classroom and instructional aides assisted in the educational plan of the children. The curriculum of this school setting included academic courses ranging from the basic to the advanced placement

level. Several students attended a major state university in the area and earned advanced college credit.

The population involved in this practicum included fourteen students who were placed in the Emotionally Handicapped program. This program, part of the school's overall Exceptional Student Education component, assisted students who have been identified as having adjustment or behavioral problems in an academic setting. The students were eligible to enroll in a maximum of five classes within the E.H. program. The remaining two classes were selected from the regular education curriculum.

Included in this student group were eleven males and three females. Of the eleven males, five were black and six caucasian. The female population consisted of 2 caucasian and one black. These students have been enrolled in the E.H. program since elementary school.
The population ranged in age from 13-14 years. Only one of the students attended E.H. classes five periods per day. Four attended three E.H. classes, while five attended two E.H. classes. One student was enrolled in this program only once daily.

Following the inception of this program, expansion of ESE classes were implemented. A classroom for students who were classified severely emotionally handicapped (SEH) in addition to a classroom for varying exceptionalities (VE) were added. It was felt that participation of this program in the additional ESE classrooms would be beneficial.

One student from the S.E.H. program was selected to participate as well as one student from the V.E. program. Both students were black males and fourteen years of age. The SEH student had come from a residential school center where he had spent the previous seven months.

The average I.Q. score for this group, based on the Weschler Intelligence Test for Children-Revised (WISC-R),was 106. The scores ranged from a high of 120 to a low of 79. Most of these students fell within the average range of intelligence based on this measure.

The students were placed in this program relative to scores on behavioral projectives compiled by the school psychologist. Many students scored low on the Myklebust Inventory of Social/Personal Behavior. Past standardized test scores showed little emotional growth had been made.

Although this measure was subjective, scores compared over the past three years indicated a consistency in the evaluator's judgment. Teachers were responsible for scoring behaviors on the Myklebust every spring.

The population for this practicum elicited several behaviors deemed inappropriate. These behaviors included a lack of self-esteem, a lack of acceptance of responsibility for their actions and poor motivation towards school and home. It was interesting to note that no conduct disorders or overt behavior problems had been indicated, particularly with the EH or VE students.

All students were able to pay for their lunch, except

one. This student received state assistance and lived with his maternal grandparents. The location of either parent was not known.

Eight of the students were living with both parents who work. The remaining two children lived with their mothers. Only one of these young people had contact with his father. Ten students in this group lived in homes owned by their parents, while one student lived in federally funded housing.

The students selected to participate as peer assistors consisted of seventeen pupils chosen from the general school population. Their age range was between 16-18 and they maintained a minimum C+ average to date. Seven of the seventeen peers were brought into the program during the second semester, as part of an expansion based on school need. These students earned enough credit to be at an age-appropriate level.

This group of students had no discipline referrals and had an I.Q. score in the average to above average range. It was hoped that several students who had received prior exceptional student education services participated in this practicum. Ideally, students who were dismissed from ESE programs were included in the selection process.

These students volunteered their time for this program. When they were not directly involved with the other group, they reported to the office as Office Aides. This segment of the population did not receive graduation

credit for their participation in this activity. These students were selected for participation in this program by recommendation of teachers and school-based administrators. A personal interview with the writer of this practicum was an integral part of this process. Those students were selected for participation based on their motivation to give their time as well as their academic performance. These students received final approval for participation through the school administration.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

For twelve years, the writer had taught children who were eligible for exceptional education services. In addition to teaching ESE children, the writer taught regular level English classes. The writer has taught at the elementary, middle and secondary levels and is currently certified in Emotionally Handicapped, Learning Disabilities Mental Retardation, English and Speech. In addition to these responsibilities, the writer developed and implemented a review course in preparation for the students taking the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT).

Part of t writer's experience has been related to implementing drama therapy curriculum to students with severe learning and emotional problems. At the time of this project, the writer was completing requirements for a Doctor of Education degree in Early and Middle Childhood.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Today's world is ever-changing. The students must be prepared for the new advances that progress society. Schools play an important part in that preparation.

Developing a positive self-concept was one component that the population for this study had not achieved. These students had yet to feel success in school and identify their individual strengths. Most of these students felt that each school day is filled with failure, not because they were unable to achieve, but because they never had the chance to examine what abilities they possessed and where their strengths lay. These students did not recognize that every individual was capable of many different things. Since they had a poor self-image, these children had not been able to work beyond their current limited levels.

Many of these students had never developed a positive peer relationship either inside or outside of school. Most

of the interactions dealt with other students who found failure in school and those who had achieved little, if any, success, in their lives. For many years, these young people had been limited knowing teachers and fellow students who participated in an exceptional student education program. Likewise, the students enrolled in the regular class did not understand the concept of special education and therefore never had the opportunity to interact with those pupils. Some students were unable to master certain concepts in various subjects. These students became frustrated and eventually stopped learning. A majority of these pupils did not have access to tutoring tutoring or other school assistance due to financial reasons or being unaware that such services were readily available in the community. Therefore, failure became the only focus of their school experience. These students gave up and eventually sought employment at minimum wage.

As this population ages, their frustrational level increases and they become bored. School was not a place where they could achieve success. It became, instead, a place to spend the day and avoid negative interaction with parents and society.

Without some level of success in their educational environment, these students became minimally productive members of society. While their potential and strengths remained untapped, these students expected failure in their educational and social contacts. It was important,

therefore, to design a program which would expose these students to success in all aspects of their surroundings.

Problem Documentation

The students enrolled in the emotionally handicapped program expressed frustration with their academic performance as well as in their social interactions. Through the class discussion process in Social/Personal class, these young people shared their inability to succeed in a school environment. They would often mention leaving school as soon as possible.

These students were so attuned to failure, that talk about turning that feeling into one of success was met with apprehension and mistrust. Based on a needs survey presented to the class, these students acknowledged that school plays an integral part of future success in the adult world. Since this population lived in an affluent area, they were cognizant of those people who had earned and reached their full potential. Therefore, these students desired that level of achievement in their own lives.

This group stated on the same survey how they had not made any significant or positive peer relationships. Several students mentioned how easy it was to become involved in drugs because those individuals were the ones

who the students became attracted to and involved themselves with. This population felt that thye would not be accepted by mainstream students and that they did not want to become involved with the most popular pupils in school (see Appendix A).

Teachers who worked with these students in other classes expressed concerns about the way the E.H. population was accepted in their class. They stated that if another student provoked misbehavior, the E.H. student would, at times, engage in that particular inappropriate action. Many of the faculty indicated that students from the mainstream considered the ESE student to be retarded or slow. They were, in fact, rejected by their peers in these classroom settings (see Appendix B).

Students in leadership and regular English classes identified that students from the ESE programs were slower than most and should be treated as such. This differential treatment involved considering this special population as retarded, outc ts of society and different. The regular students also felt that ESE students did not participate in any extra-curricular activities and that they were, at best, tolerated by others (see Appendix C).

For the most part, the regular population interacted with the E.H. population seldomly, if ever. Students in the mainstream could not identify E.H. students by name but described the special young people as the ones who were always suspended or dressed a certain way. Most of the

mainstream students had never desired making contact with an emotionally handicapped individual and expressed intense concern over what their friends would think of such an interaction. It was clear that no prior exposure from either group had been successfully completed. There appeared to be a misconception and misunderstanding as to reasons why students were placed in special programs.

In this particular school setting, the leadership class was directly involved in working with the students identified as mentally retarded. This interaction was limited to ice cream parties given before holidays and at the end of the year. Through observation, these leadership students remained clustered with each other rather than sharing time with the ESE students.

The leadership group was asked whether they totally understood that the school had several other programs within the exceptional education student setting. They were told that a program for the gifted, learning disabled, and emotionally handicapped student was available in this school. The only program which they could identify with was the one for gifted pupils.

These students considered learning disabilities to be a milder form of retardation and consider emotionally handicapped students to be those under the influence of drugs and those who were involved in police matters. These same students could not identify in what classrooms these ESE classes were held and who the teachers for the LD and

EH programs were (see Appendix D).

Parents had not been contacted for reactions to this study. There appeared to be sufficient discrepancy between regular and ESE students in both cognitive and affective domains. Those students who were successful in school did not know how to positively impact those who were not achievers.

Many of the emotionally handicapped students fulfilled their expected prophecies. Suspensions for misconduct, leaving school early and/or direct disobedience were common in some instances. Attendance records also indicated that the E.H. pupil accumulated an excessive number of unexcused absences yearly. Since school policy dictated that students were only allowed ten absences per semester before class credit was withheld, most of the students were aware that they would probably fail regardless of the quality of their work.

The E.H. students stated that many mornings, when they left for school, they intended to arrive in time for their first class. However, several students became sidetracked and ended up somewhere else. One student came to school, found a hiding place and spent the day there, never attending class. This clever individual felt it was an accomplishment to remain on school property and supersede being found by the administration.

Therefore, it can be stated that many E.H. students set themselves up for failure prior to attempting to find

success. Many of these young people were so accustomed to rejection in school that they expected nothing better. Since these students had achieved nothing other than failure, they did not have the skills necessary to identify and feel success.

Throughout their educational experiences, the E.H. student found a classroom filled with low expectations and frustration. These students remained in this special classroom and were given rare opportunities to interact with the general school population. Therefore, they remained in a negative pattern from elementary school on to the time their formal education ceases.

Causative Analysis

Through the review of anecdotal records and specific course objectives, it was found that E.H. students had improperly interacted with peers and had intense social/personal problems. These students had never been taught the aspects of appropriate interpersonal and social communication and had never been exposed to peers who had achieved such. There was no mention in course objectives for the social/personal curriculum of strategies or methods for improving academic or social/personal communication skills.

Although this type of instruction had been used for years in other settings, it had never been attempted at

this level and at this particular setting. Hence, without the proper support and training, these students could not be expected to achieve in either the academic or social/personal realm. Therefore, the chance of academic success for these students remained hampered.

It is important to remember that the students involved in the regular level educational experience did not interact with the ESE students. Therefore, this regular population became limited in exposure to the total school population. They, like the ESE students, related to their friends within their respective environments. Consequently, both populations were unaware of each other and their abilities. Limited exposure prohibits students from utilizing individual talents which can be shared in some instances.

As schools become more accountable for performance, educators must find ways to improve academic performance from both a cognitive and emotional standpoint. When all students are given the opportunity to achieve success and are allowed to incorporate their potential and strengths in their environment, schools will be more able to directly impact their populations positively.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Much research has been completed regarding why many ESE and E.H. students have never learned strategies to success. The literature contains a plethora of evidence which gives reasons for poor school performance, both academically and socially. Much of the literature review supports the contentions dealt with in this paper.

Many researchers consider rejection by peers and adults as the main reason for school failure. Bruninks (1978) found that emotionally handicapped children were rejected by other students in the school who had no involvement in any ESE program. Gresham (1986) found that E.H. and L.D. students were overtly rejected from the first day and that many regular students purposely avoided contact with any ESE classroom. Bryan and Bryan (1983) found that verbal interactions among E.H. students and regular students usually end up in discipline referrals for both parties. Another study found that emotionally handicapped and learning disabled students were capable only of negative interactions with their classmates (Cullinan, Epstein and Lloyd, 1986). These students were so cognizant of their exceptionality that they usually would take their anger out on each other.

Sutherland, Algozzine, Vaseldyke and Freeman (1983) found that most teachers with ESE populations focused on the academic curriculum and removed students who interacted with other students negatively rather than attempt to

improve these relationships among students. Emphasis in remediation has been limited to academic skills rather than social ability and that teachers rely more on recommendations of behavioral specialists to assist them in disciplining their students.

It was taken for granted that peer status was related to an individual's level of social ability (Trapani, 1988). Studies indicate that early problems in peer relationships do directly impact social development in later life (Hartup, 1970). Adolescent delinquency, dropping out of school and discharge from the military and job, as well as mental health problems have all been related to problems in peer relations at a young age (Hartup, 1957). Cowen, Pederson, Babigian, Izzo and Trost (1973) as well as Roff (1961) found that most adolescents and high school students who were hospitalized for emotional problems had never found success in developing positive peer interactions in school. It was also found that a direct correlation between dishonorable discharges from the armed services and school performance exists.

Cobb (1982) and Barclay (1966) found that high social status in childhood was directly related to high academic abilities. Both studies found that students who had learned how to interact with peers were more eager to ask classmates for assistance and guidance in both academics and social skills. These students were enrolled in ESE classes and were usually dismissed from these programs

prior to entry in high school. In addition, these two studies mentioned that high social status in childhood is directly related to academic achievement and interpersonal relations in adult life. The inclusion and development of social skills is important, as peer interactions and social skills are parallel to acquiring acceptable status and roles in adult life (Greenspan, 1981).

Mastropieri, Jenkins and Scrugge (1985) indicated that many E.H. students exhibit deficits in social functioning. It was found that these students have never learned to model appropriate social skills from others because they were often ostracized from the regular school population. It was also mentioned that teachers direct their class time more towards academics than behaviors. As in a previously mentioned study, these students became disruptive influences in school and at home.

Scruggs, Mastropieri and Richter (1985) felt that emotionally handicapped students have a special need for assistance because of their lower academic functioning related to their behaviors which interfere with learning. Kaufman (1984) also found that emotionally handicapped students perform poorly in the academic realm because they possess serious deficits in social functioning. Quay (1979) stated that these areas of social dysfunction include self-esteem, social adjustment and attitudes toward school.

In a study completed by Thornburg (1978) age was a

major influence upon social attitudes. As the student approaches middle childhood, the student is unsure of his or her identity, has problems with rapid physical growth and begins to observe significant behavioral changes. There is also a direct impact of social awkwardness and a tremendous increase in peer influence. If the child has not yet learned how to interact positively by this age, they usually give up and become bored with school.

Interestingly enough, Brown (1986) found that school personnel, from administrators to teachers, hold prejudice against exceptional education students and do not want them in the school. Many principals would prefer suspension to support services, thereby reinforcing continued failure for the student. Burson, Marcon, and Coon (1981) found that teachers, administrators and students expect that ESE students are less capable than others and that taking the time to improve social skills will not change their negative behavior patterns.

Many children are not interested in the curriculum being presented (Hall, Delquardi, Greenwood and Thurston, 1982). Many E.H. students keep their anger from a previous conflict in the way of their learning. They consequently become bored with the curriculum, blame the teacher for their boredom and do not resolve their emotional conflicts during the entire day. These students, therefore, are turned off to school and resent the time they have to spend in class.

Many students sit at their desks and do not receive help from the teacher because the teacher is busy with other students or dealing with a behavior problem (Greenwood, Dinwiddie, Terry, Wade, Stanley, Thibadeau and Delquardi, 1985). Interestingly, these students only utilized one-twelfth of their class time effectively. The remaining part of the time they usually acted out, gave up with their work or became frustrated. Stanley and Greenwood (1983) stated that many of these same students in the E.H. class could perform better if they were taught the proper skills for communication and interaction with peers and were eventually moved out of the E.H. setting. This study implied that many students are placed in ESE programs for the wrong reasons.

Since many students placed in emotionally handicapped classes have academic difficulties related to their behavior problems, it is necessary to mention the effect that academic competency has on the performance of these children. Henk, Helfeldt and Platt (1986) indicated that many L.D. and E.H. students have intense difficulty in reading. These students are unable to read well, recall information, or understand what they are reading. They become more frustrated because they cannot get help in the classroom and begin to think they are unable to function effectively in school. Many of these same students do not know how to listen, interpret and sort out instructions or praise from teachers (Kaluuger and Kolson, 1978). These

students become involved in altercations with peers and teachers because they do not listen carefully to what is being said to them.

Many parents reported that social skills and emotional skills may be stronger indicators of success in school rather than IQ and standardized achievement scores (Richards and McCandless, 1972). Most parents stated that being able to interact socially with peers was tantamount to school success. Also, it was mentioned that both parents and teachers felt that academic scores are lower than potential because children had not attained an age-appropriate level of peer interaction and social/personal behavior.

Lagreca and Meisbov (1978) investigated the social demands of L.D. and E.H. students and the mainstreamed setting. Students had tremendous difficulty interacting with peers and teachers because they were unaccustomed to being surrounded by children outside of their exceptional education environment. Garret and Crump (1980) found similar evidence when investigating regular teachers expectations on ESE students placed in their classes. These teachers reported that the ESE students were unable to become a full and integral part of the class process because they were unable to positively interact with the entire class and that most of these ESE students needed to return to that setting to feel comfortable.

Children in the E.H. and L.D. classrooms who have poor

peer relations can benefit from social skills training (Staub, 1975). Students who were unable to integrate and function independently in a regular class were usually returned to the ESE setting, however, these students did become aware, however, minimally, to the ways the regular pupils interact with each other.

Communication for E.H. and L.D. children is limited (Bryan, Donahue, Pearl and Storm, 1981). ESE students make negative statements in discussions than do regular students and are more unable to initiate and maintain a conversation with others. Boys were more involved in this concept than were girls.

Passive academic involvement and poor motivation were found to be significant among emotionally handicapped children (Deshler, Schumaker and Lenz, 1984). Whalen and Torgeson (1982) identified that E.H. and L.D. children became inactive learners because they were unmotivated to learn or participate in class. Zigmond, Kerrand Schaeffer (1986) reported that reasons why children become unmotivated related directly to their lack of peer interaction and their inability to know proper ways to develop effective relationships with each other.

In the cognitive realm, Donahoe and Zigmund (1986) stated that both E.H. and L.D. students received below average grades in academic subjects approximately 80% of the time. Most of these students were unable to complete the work without assistance and in many cases were unable

to finish the assignments within a given period of time (Schumaker, SHeldon-Wilgren and Sherman, 1980).

Kaluger and Kolson (1978) found that almost 90% of L.D. and E.H. students exp- ienced significant difficulties in reading. Henk, Helfeldt and Platt (1986) stated that reading and spelling were the most difficult subjects for ESE students and that teachers were unable to assist these students as much as necessary because of class size or lack of an instructional aide in the classroom.

Towner (1984) found that opportunities for effective interaction among regular and emotionally handicapped students were minimal. Schools reported that consideration given to social/personal interactions as part of the needed curriculum had never been given because it is more the responsibility of the school to support academics. This study showed a significant change in the emotionally handicapped students performance when appropriate exchanges between students occurred.

Interpersonal communication skills appear deficient in all categories of exceptional student education (Strain, 1981). The students in this study, including emotionally handicapped pupils, had no observable training in communicating their feelings or beliefs to others, especially peers. The educational history of these students showed that almost 90% of them had been placed in an ESE class since elementary school and had no exposure outside of that situation.

Guralnick (1981) reported that an absence of social and communication skills prevents the proper development of intellectual , language and other skills. It was found that reading abilities as well as speech were depressed in children who had not developed effective communication skills, or had not identified positive peer interactions. Social/personal skills appeared as a legitimate construct for education where the social consequences extend out of the classroom and into the real world.

A lack of social/personal and communication skills in childhood stands a the single best predictor of adjustment problems in adulthood (Roff, 1961). Those students who had problems relating effectively with peers or whose social interactions were limited were bound to be less likely to succeed in careers, marriages and other relevant life issues. These students were often in trouble with the law, and were unable to keep a job more than a few weeks, or a month, at best.

Well-documented research has shown that a significant problem exists. Not only are social interactions considered important to academic success, but academic problems can be aided by peer assistance. Children who have been restricted in ESE class settings have been denied the opportunity to interact with other students from the regular population.

Peer relationships are tantamount to the development of a well rounded individual. Research has shown that a

high, positive correlation between self-image and success exists. Students who do not communicate effectively are inhibited inn developing in scope and understanding of society.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of this practicum was to increase the social/ personal behavior and academic performance of the students enrolled in the program for the emotionally handicapped. During implementation, the students developed the ability to interact with another student who was assigned to them. During this interaction, the E.H. and S.E.H. students identified his or her strengths and abilities, and thereby began to develop a more positive self-concept.

This practicum was designed to increase the academic performance of students in the E.H.,S.E.H. and V.E. program. Through peer assistance and interaction, the students became motivated to satisfactorily complete their school work and pass their classes. Those students who have identifiable and measurable learning problems, were assisted by peers to increase their understanding and retention of academic material that was previously difficult.

Another objective of this practicum was to expose the peer assistors to the exceptional student education program and have these students identify how their assistance has positively impacted the E.H. population. It was hoped, therefore, that this practicum would increase awareness of

individual differences and needs and assist both groups of students in interpersonal communication growth.

Behavioral Objectives

The following goals were developed for this practicum:

At the end of the ten month implementation period:

1. Each student will successfully demonstrate appropriate social/personal behaviors 80% of class time as reported on Appendix K.

2. Each student will contact their peer assistor on five independent occasions during the term of the practicum as reported on Appendix H.

3. The student will demonstrate two of five behaviors at least 80% of class intervals as reported on Appendix L.

4. The students will attend school regularly and will not accumulate more than two unexcused absences.

5. The students will increase their class averages in all classes a minimum of one letter grade.

6. Based on the social/personal categories found on the Myklebust Social/Personal Inventory, the students will increase their average score on at least three categories a minimum of 80%.

7. Each peer assistor will indicate that the student demonstrated a minimum of five of the eleven behaviors on a weekly basis as demonstrated on Appendix I.

Measurement of Objectives

Both peer students and E.H. pupils kept a notebook where they wrote what they had experienced. This diary measured the interaction happening between the students and identified what improvements that had been made weekly during this practicum.

Peer students completed one or both forms weekly. The first form (see Appendix H) indicated the date, assignment, weaknesses and strengths of student and important observations for each day. This information was the basis for the peer assistors weekly diary entry. This form included the expected level of performance for each assignment. This was only one way to measure the success of the students' interactions.

The next form (see Appendix I) listed the date,

activity, and identified a specific goal for interaction. Such things as verbal praise, smiles, positive comments, etc., were tallied. Each student was expected to achieve a specific level weekly. Each week, the amount of positive positive behaviors were expected to increase. The determination of these measurements was completed by the writer and peer assistors. Final resolution of this matter was made by the writer of this study.

This particular form helped to identify observations made outside of the classroom relative to peer interactions. Teachers were asked to report on any measurable changes observed in class, either positive or negative. These results were tallied by the writer of this project and compiled in measurable terms.

A form to keep track of progress of the affective responses was developed (see Appendix J). Observations observed by teachers and students were listed on this form or measure. The categories included: attendance, student interaction, discipline problem, test scores, homework productivity and facial expressions. Specific comments reported were also documented on this form so that a more complete result could be reported. Determination of the category where the observation was to take place was made by the writer.

Academic improvement was included in the teacher observations given to the writer weekly. A homework average and test average was be kept in each student's folder.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

A great deal of research related to the success of peer intervention has been completed. Many strategies for solving this problem have been attempted, reviewed and documented. Through this review, a solution for this practicum was developed.

Cohen, Kulik and Kulik (1982) analyzed 65 tutoring and peer programs initiated in well structured and more cognitively oriented programs. The results indicated that tutoring produced larger effects in well sequenced and lower level skills. Tutoring programs that had a shorter duration appeared to show larger gains from the students. This study also indicated that planning a program where peer tutors are directly involved with students no more than three times weekly was successful. Also, in some cases, peer tutors were changed at semester time so that the students did not become too dependent upon one person. Also, tutors were found to have a better understanding of their own expectations and were more able to deliver the specific subject content to the student. It was also found that student attitudes towards subject matter were more positive in classrooms where peer programs were implemented.

Other studies have examined the effects of tutorial and small group instruction. Jenkins, Heyhall, Peschka and Jenkins (1974) compared teacher-led small group instruction with one to one instruction delivered by peer tutors. These children who were receiving tutorial services were learning disabled and behavior disordered. They were enrolled in resource classes for a minimum of two times per day. The peer tutors were the same age and had received minimal training in working with these students. They had worked with the ESE students for several months. Learning was greatest in the tutorial situation when compared to small group instruction. One to one instruction provided improvement in motivation, attitude and academic performance. It was also observed that many students were eager to attend school and that absenteeism decreased among this group.

Peer assistants need training so that the most effective program can be developed. Feshbach (1976) reported that tutors who are not properly trained become bossy and tend to ridicule the students assigned to them. It is therefore necessary to train tutors to develop appropriate interpersonal communication skills so that these peer students can readily identify the positive habits exhibited by the students they directly work with. This will provide a comfortable and satisfying experience for all members of the tutorial setting.

Feshbach also noted that children's tendency to

respond to others is related to the tutor's socioeconomic class, race, mother's reinforcement style and cognitive-achievement abilities. While some students may look at their tutorial role with already existing interpersonal and social skills, others will need more training and close close supervision.

Niedermeyer (1970) reported that teachers must give clear instructions to tutors so that the tutors can relay clear, succinct directions to the students. It is also important to praise students for their efforts, praise and confirm correct responses, avoid overprompting and make corrections in a positive way. Without the proper training Niedermeyer further stated that tutors tended to enforce correct responses and appropriate behavior only 50% of the time and praised the students less than that. These peer tutors did not engage in friendly or appropriate non-instructional conversation before or after the session. This conversation has been found to be an integral and necessary part of developing a positive relationship between the tutor and the student. While examining the importance of tutor training, it was reported that those students who received some type of training gave proper feedback and positive communication over 85% of the time.

Peer tutors hold specific responsibilities. Price and Dequine (1982) found that each tutor must assist students with special educational needs through a program which contains specific goals, lessons and checklists. Prior to

the first encounter with the student, the peer must attend a training session and is guided through ways to intervene and correct errors when made, so that each student feels motivated through this program as well as in their other tasks.

Also, the peer tutors are to assist in teaching students how to organize their materials and study more effectively. Each tutor should work with a checklist that indicates progress made on a daily basis. These worksheets are to include what assignment should be covered as well as criteria met in relation to expectations. It is felt that through these measures, students will interact with each other in a positive way (Trapani, 1988). Also, this method would be an effective way to collect data.

This study also found that proper peer tutor training improves attention of students with special needs. Sharing social experiences also improves self-esteem and working attitudes as well as decreasing destructive behaviors. Increased work productivity and decreased stigma of special needs are also met as well as the development of new and positive peer friendships.

Land (1984) found that peer tutoring has been a successful method for improving instruction as far back as the 1500's. Several modern educational theories, including Montessori, have been successful in using peer tutors to improve instruction. This theory relied on the individual ability of peer tutoring to more adequately meet individual needs and personal interests.

Bloom (1984) found that there were many advantages associated with peer tutoring. In one study, Bloom found that peer tutored students outperformed 98% of the students who were not receiving peer assistance. Student attitudes and communication in conjunction with self- concept improved dramatically.

Peer tutoring allows students to more quickly get responses to questions or problems when teachers are busy (Hiebert, 1980). Students were able to draw upon each others strengths and the ESE students were able to identify positive areas of their personalities which they were unaware of prior to intervention. Increased learning time, by using peer tutors, improved grades. The ESE students, particularly the E.H. population, were more involved in direct instruction, thereby creating less time for acting out behaviors or inappropriate actions to surface. Also, increased self-concept and motivation were observed because students found success quicker and more accurately. Immediate reinforcement was found to be a component for success. The students were able to respond more appropriately and gave the teacher more time to focus on other classroom problems.

Hill and Sardar (1981) conducted a study where 38 tutors and 38 ESE students were involved in sessions related to mathematics. While the results were mixed regarding the efficacy of peer tutoring, this study showed that tutoring did increase motivation, achievement and

self-direction of students. Walberg (1984) reported that personalized and adaptive learning, such as tutoring, increased learning. Burke (1983) also found that the use of peer tutoring increased student motivation and academic competence. As in past studies, this one also supported the contention that self-image is dramatically improved.

Many tutors increase their own knowledge of subject matter and improve their self confidence and self esteem while being tutors (Reed, 1976). The tutors were given the opportunity to interact with other students, develop their own strengths, improve their communication skills and feel as though they have assisted in the growth of other individuals.

Self confidence and more positive attitudes are one important element of a successful peer tutoring program. Price and Dequine (1982) studied a peer tutorial group of low-achieving students serving as tutors. These children experienced tremendous gains in self-esteem,including basic academic skills and vocabulary. Tyler (1984) reported that the tutor exhibited increased effort and concentration, assisting them in improving academically. Therefore, the students felt more capable of performing better and thus improved their self image.

Lazerson (1980) conducted a study which examined gains in self-concept and improvement in behavior for sixty students. Both aggressive and withdrawn children showed improved self-concept and an increased attitude toward school and the learning process. Candler, Blackburn and

Sowell (1981) supported the contention that peer tutoring increased interest in school as well as academic performance and self-concept.

Hailey (1981) studied 104 students involved in a peer tutoring program for ESE mathematics. A significant difference was found for the group who were tutored as opposed to the group who did not receive assistance at the .05 level. The students who improved through the tutorial assistance also increased academically as well as socially.

Epstein (1980) found that LD and EH students who are involved in direct peer tutor programs improved academic abilities as much as one year after intervention. Kane and Alley (1980) support this contention and found that most exceptional education students can gain as much as one year in ability after peer tutoring interventions. Lazerson (1980) and McHale, Olley, Marcus and Simeonsson (1981) reported that ESE students gained as much as two years in social/personal interactions. These students were first able to relate to their peer assistors and were able to continue interacting with students in other classes as well as improving behavior in the cafeteria.

Student gains were reported in social/personal skills as well as self-concept among ESE students while at home or out of the school setting (Osguthorpe, Eiserman, Shisler, Top and Scruggs, 1985). Parents, asked to rank their children's behaviors, indicated that growth in family interactions had increased tremendously within six months

after intervention. Snell (1979) found that many ESE students could integrate effectively with other students and were able to perform in regular level classes within six months.

Travato and Bucher (1980) believe that three forms of peer tutoring must be considered in planning an appropriate and successful program. Selecting regular class students to assist ESE students is one of the more successful methods. This interaction encourages social skills from both parties and improves interpersonal awareness of abilities readily. They also suggest selecting handicapped students to work with other handicapped students since the parties would feel more equally able to interact with each other. It was found, however, that matching students in this method can be difficult and tedious.

The third approach suggested brings handicapped students in to assist regular students. This approach is used to improve the attitude of regular students to handicapped students. Since many regular students consider exceptional children to be retarded this method is deemed appropriate in changing the negative attitudes of regular students (Garrett and Crump, 1980). There is no data that indicates how successful this strategy has been, however.

Casanova (1988) stated that selection of tutors is tantamount to success in this type of program. Selection of the tutor relies on the type of program which is chosen for implementation. Older students working directly with

younger students should be used only if a comparison of students' interests and skills in relating to the younger children is given consideration.

Also, Casanova relates that effective tutors should be only slightly ahead of their student in conceptual formation and academics. Pairing, therefore, must be based on potential and compatibility.

Toskas (1987) related the success of the SAILS program. This program, designed to assist students who have consistent difficulties, such as coping or academic ability, is developed to specifically address problem areas. One key component of this program is to develop a more positive attitude toward school and self-concept.

This program meets for twenty minutes daily. Students are allowed to be in the program indefinitely, as long as progress is continual. Direct strategies are developed from the Individual Education Program (IEP) for each student and success is measured based on these objectives. This program involves assistance in all academic classes. This system only incorporates social skills related to the academic interactions.

Once students have improved, however, they are then assigned to a group designed to identify if the lack of motivation is related to a source other than skill deficiency or poor conceptual understanding. From this point, the students are directed to discuss affective areas and to identify methods for improving communication.

This program has been deemed successful. Students have shown improvements in all areas within one school year.

Maheady, Harper and Sacca (1988) reported that successful classroom tutoring can be managed within the classroom. Selecting students from the same classroom to tutors others in that environment can be useful. Student interaction is more comfortable because the students are familiar with each other. There is no evidence, however, that this method increases self-esteem or interpersonal communication.

Computers used as reinforcement are effective tools in a tutorial setting (Jason, Pillen and Olson, 1986). Following the time the student works with his or her peer assistor, reinforcing those skills covered on a computer have increased academic retention almost 20%. The one problem mentioned, however, is the cost of both hardware and software. Since ESE curriculum is individualized, the purchase of software remains prohibitive. Shisler, Osguthorpe and Eisenman (1987) reported that students who are considered classroom stars are less effective when working with emotionally handicapped children. Students who are not as well known in the school setting, and who are more average in abilities are the ones who have the most positive impact upon this particular population.

Jenkins and Jenkins (1985) related the importance of the role of program manager. The person who runs the program must be able to positively critique the

effectiveness of the peer assistor. Peer assistors who feel that their efforts are not satisfactory or evaluated tend to drift away from their student socially and make the sessions less meaningful for both the student and tutor. It is important, therefore, that the program manager observe, listen and report on the interaction of the two students in a positive way. Tri-weekly or weekly meetings are an effective way to report observations and evaluate progress (Jenkins and Jenkins, 1987).

Lloyd, Crowley, Kohler and Strain (1988) found that cooperative learning is a key to success. The program manager must make this a learning experience for his or her and share this growth with the peer team and students. It was reported that this improved the self-image and communication skills of all three parties and that academic progress became more directed and was achieved quicker.

Turkel and Abramson (1986) found that peer tutoring has prevented high school ESE students from dropping out. The E.H. students were able to relate their lack of motivation and boredom with school as key reasons for considering leaving school prior to graduation. Over 80% of students who were considered potential dropouts remained in school and felt that the relationship they developed with their peer assistor was one of the most positive interactions they had ever had. This theory, called mentoring, states that academic progress is more likely to happen when the potential dropout improves his or her self-concept.

Strain and Odum (1986) reported that deficiencies in social skills is one of the most common disabilities found in exceptional students. They, therefore, developed a program known as the social initiation intervention.

Regular students make social contact with ESE students before approaching academic remediation. This modeling approach allows the exceptional child to understand immediately what an effective social-personal interaction is. Although this approach has been attempted on pre-school and elementary school age children, it can be effective in later years if the regular student has exhibited age-appropriate social skills as determined by teachers and administrators in the school. Contact should also be made outside of the classroom and such areas as the playground, or lunchroom are ideal times for the peer assistor to communicate with the ESE student. Also, this gives the tutor the opportunity to observe their student in a situation outside of the classroom and document interactions which may be deemed inappropriate. It is felt that this interaction must occur daily.

Overall, the literature provides many useful methods to developing a successful and meaningful peer assistance team. Both useful and less than useful strategies are discussed so that identification of an appropriate and effective program can be made. The potential for improving academic achievement and social/personal skills is well documented and supported. From this information, a program

for this project was developed.

Report of Action Taken

Peer assistors were trained prior to the beginning of the school year. Following the interview process, students selected were asked to attend training sessions where positive communication skills were taught and reviewed. These students role played situations with each other and evaluated the results. A review of academic skills in English, including punctuation, reading comprehension and vocabulary, was presented at another session.

Matching peer assistors and students wase completed after interests and attitudes were examined. Peers and students with similar interests and parallel academic abilities were matched. When a peer assistor indicated an interest in working with social/personal problems, that consideration was made. Likewise, if a peer assistor felt more competent working with a student's academic needs, that match was made.

Personalities and demeanor were also considered in making these matches. For example, a peer assistor who was shy and reserved was not matched with a student who had a similar personality description. Although it has been stated that matching similarities may be useful, the type of similarity was evaluated prior to pairing the two students.

Tutors were expected to work with students a minimum of three times per week. Specific goals and objectives were identified each week. The peer assistors were expected to prepare for teaching these students specific skills each weekend prior to implementation of that skill. The peer assistors kept a daily log of results, including scores on assignments. Also, the peer assistors were expected to document the type of interaction that occured that day. Specific information, including comments made by students, or changes towards friends or family were also included.

Students selected to be peer assistors in this practicum were interviewed by the writer. These students completed a two-part process. First, each student was involved in an oral interview whereby the purpose of this program was discussed. The student was also given a description of the population that they would be working with. The peer candidates needed to appear self-motivated. Their candidacy was supported by the definition of their long-term goals and a discussion of the activities and accomplishments they have achieved since being in school. A review of discipline, attendance and academic records was made to be certain that the peer candidate did not exhibit any overt behavior problems or attendance difficulties.

Peer assistors were expected to have no discipline referrals for any reason during the preceding year and these students were expected to be in school regularly and

had to have no record of excessive absences. More than five absences during any one quarter was the level where peers would no longer qualify for acceptance into this program. It was also expected that peers maintained a C+ average throughout high school.

Due to scheduling problems and requirements for graduation, only seniors were eligible for participation. These seniors had to have enough credits earned so that they were allowed to leave school early. It was this extra time that was going to be allocated for peer-student interaction. Any student who had not earned sufficient credits to be eligible for "senior privilege" were not allowed to enter the program. The methods for monitoring self-motivtion included the completion of a form by classroom teachers (see Appendix F).

Peer assistors were expected to consult with the writer of this report should any unexpected problems or difficulties arise. Such things as threatened suicide, drug problems or sexual crises were to be brought to the attention of the writer. Since many of these problems required attention as mandated by law, it was imperative that each peer was congnizant of their responsibility in this area. A further discussion of the severity of several severe situations is found in the next chapter of this report.

Peer assistors were matched to E.H. students by how the peers answered academic and affective questions on their

written interest inventory (see Appendix G). This written section was an additional and important part of the selection process. Students indicated their attitudes related to academic questions and affective behaviors. This instrument, also allowed the peer assistor candidate to respond to incomplete statements. The responses were to assist the implementor in determining attitudes and beliefs which aided in peer-student matches.

Both peer students and E.H. pupils kept a notebook where they wrote what they had both accomplished during a given week. This diary measured the interaction between students and identified the changes, both positive and negative that had been made during each week of the implementation period.

Peer students completed one or both forms weekly. The first form (see Appendix H) indicated the date, goal, weaknesses and strengths of student and any other relevant or important observations for each day. This information was the basis for the peer assistors weekly diary entry. This form included the expected level of performance for each assignment. This was one way that was utilized to measure the success of the students' interactions.

The next form (see Appendix I) listed the date, activity, and identified a specific goal for interaction. Such things as verbal praise, smiles, positive comments, etc., were tallied. Each student was expected to achieve a specific level, weekly. Each week, the amount of

positive behaviors were expected to increase. The determination of these measurements was completed by the writer and peer assistors. Final resolution of this matter was made by the writer of this study.

This particular form identified observations outside of the classroom relating to peer interactions. Teachers were asked to report on any measurable changes observed in class, either positive or negative. These results were tallied by the writer of this program and compiled in measurable terms.

A form to keep track of progress of the affective responses was developed (see Appendix J). Behaviors observed by teachers and students were listed on this measure. The categories included: attendance, student interaction, discipline problem, test scores, homework productivity and facial expressions. Specific comments reported were documented on this form so that a more complete result can be reported. Determination of the category where the observation was placed was made by the writer.

Academic improvement was included in the teacher observations made to the writer weekly. A homework average and test average was kept in each E.H. student's folder. The deans normally reported referrals to the ESE teachers regularly. Therefore, discipline problems were closely monitored and collated.

The ESE student was also expected to keep a diar-

listing the work they completed as well as any reactions they have to the peer tutor. These diaries were read by the program manager weekly and data was transferred to the students' folders.

Regular class teachers were asked to complete a form indicating academic performance as well as objective observations of social skills. These results were charted and tallied for result reporting. The culmination of these statistics were used to indicate success outside of the ESE classroom situation.

During the days when the peer assistors were not present, curriculum relating to interpersonal communication and self-concept was presented to the E.H. students. They were expected to learn various techniques and transfer this learning to the interactions in meetings with their peer assistors. Modification and changes in curriculum was necessary as warranted. Should the program manager feel that the EH students were not gaining expected results, the type of curriculum used may be subject to change.

Modifications of the program as well as the need for flexibility was tantamount to the program's success. Any unexpected results were observed or any difficulties related to the development of strategies for this program occurred modifications and changes were made. These changes were documented and the reason for making the change was listed, as well.

The role of the program manager was to monitor and

observe the interactions of the students. The program manager becase an iaportant, but secondary part of the interactions. When a minor problem or difficulty was noted the program manager intervened and suggested alternative approaches for the peer assistor to utilize. EH students were asked to report any negative observations and document them to the program manager. These students were expected to share their feelings regarding this program in weekly discussions. These discussions were part of the curriculum.

Weekly meetings, either before or after school hours were held with the program manager and peer assistors. These meetings were held to discuss interactions and particular situations that happened during the week. These meetings also evaluated progress for each peer assistor. This time was to be utilized so that peers could share techniques or approaches that had worked in various situations. This created the opportunity for peers to attempt new or proven strategies.

At the end of the first semester, or midway point of this practicum, assignments of peer assistor and student were changed. This was necessary due to schedule problems and the effect of these changes are discussed in Chapter 5. The implication of these changes had a tremendous impact upon both the peer and student.

The strategies mentioned for this program have been developed from the review of the literature completed earlier in this chapter. Selection of this approach

incorporated the most effective components of other programs. Some of these approaches were modified because of differences in age and grade. The data which supported this program indicated that there was a great correlation between success and strategies. It was hoped that collection of the data in this manner would be useful in making these results more measurable. This method provided for the reporting of more accurate and meaningful results.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

The results of this practicum showed a plethora of changes that positively impacted the students. The results and summary of data for this implementation are addressed in this section as separate components. The correlation of this data will be discussed in the Conclusions section of this report.

The peer selection process went smoothly. Peers were selected from the criteria set and they attended a full day workshop to show their interest in working with a particular type of student. Students were matched to peers based on this information and student-peer interactions began immediately. Peers did not directly state to the student their purpose in working with them. It was felt that this would bias the student's opinion of program participation.

Peers spent two days talking with the student to whom they were assigned before deciding on a short term goal. The program manager assisted the peers in planning what goal to set, how to implement strategies to see its success, and how to measure gains made. Most peers appeared to expect too much from the students too soon.

Because of the addition of new programs to the ESE

department, peers were assigned to students in the EH, SEH and VE classrooms. Not only did this broaden the program initially, it allowed the peers to gain a wider spectrum of what special education was and how these services were delivered to the different students in varying programs. The types of objectives and goals set for each program were individualized within the constraints of each program and teacher.

Many teachers at first were eager to have peers in their rooms to do filing, and aide duties. It was quickly determined that these teachers needed to be advised of what the peer duties would be. Once this meeting was held, this issue was resolved. The peers were asked to report any discrepancies or abnormal requests to the program manager so that the proper clarification could be made.

Student attendance was compiled to verify if improvement was made. It was found that many ESE students will not attend school and will not be ill. It was found that attendance during the entire year did improve for those students who were involved in this program. Figure 1 shows the increased attendance figures between all four quarters. It is important to remember that school attendance during the first quarter of the year is to be used as a starting point, only. The increases in school attendance rose steadily during the school year. Many students appeared to be eager to speak with their peer and it was reported that students stated to their peer that they came to school on a

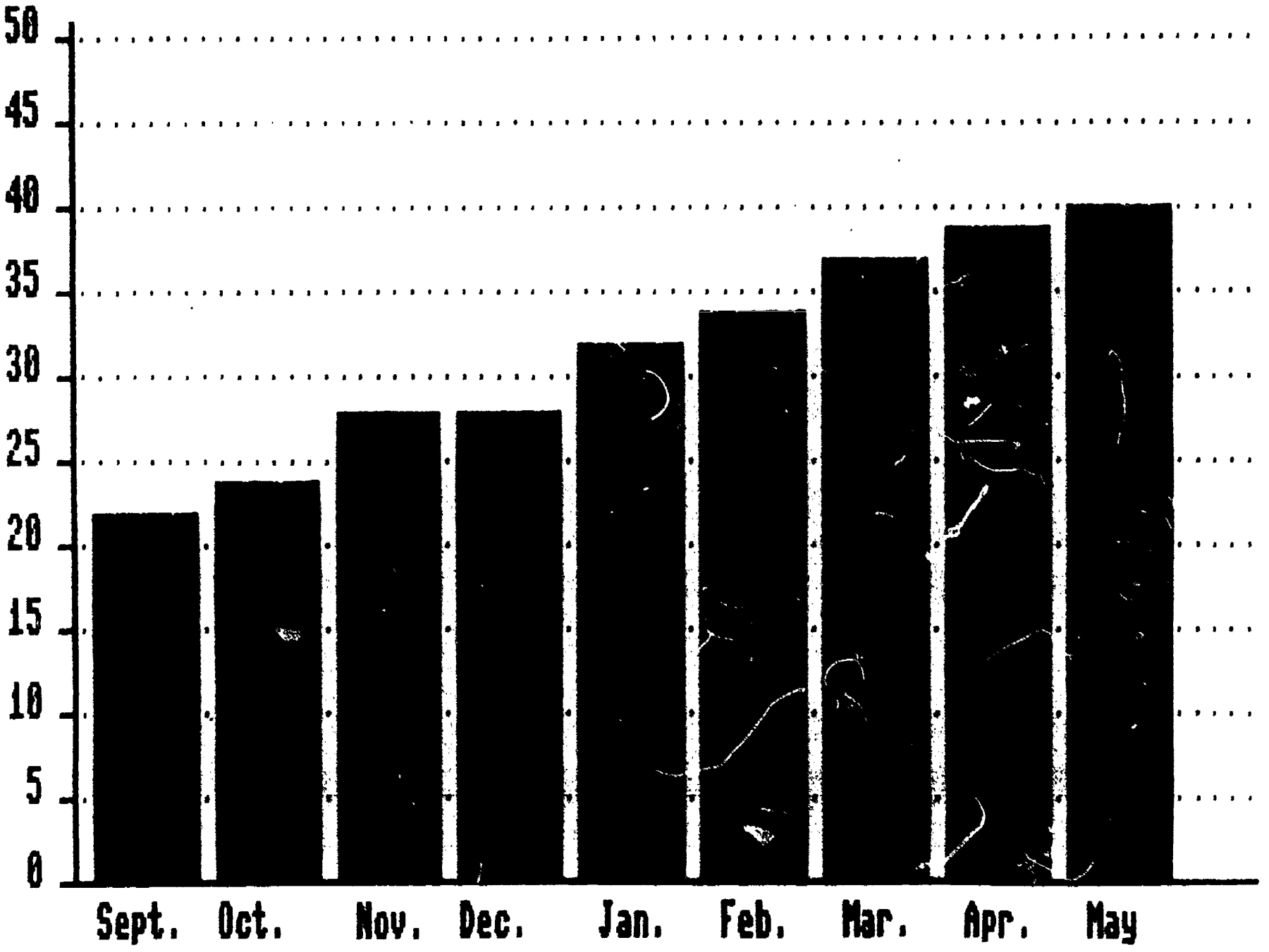


Figure 1- AVERAGE NUMBER OF DAYS STUDENTS ATTENDED CLASS

specific day only to interact with their peer. Therefore, it is apparent that this program met with success in increasing student attendance.

Criteria for establishing appropriate social/personal interactions included the observations and collection of data in certain areas. Inappropriate use of language was one area where the students needed to make changes. Therefore, peers and teachers were asked to monitor the frequency of inappropriate language during interaction. Peers were asked to address this issue in a positive manner with their students and record the instances when students language was improper. Figure 2 shows that throughout the period of implementation, students were able to decrease their usage of inappropriate language. The peer pressure and desire for acceptance by the student from their peer may have had a tremendous impact.

Another area that seemed important to ameliorate was getting the students to remain on task throughout class time. Many students would enter the class, putting their heads down on their desks, and choosing to not complete the daily assignment. Rather than make this a disciplinary issue, as required by school policy, peers were asked to assist their students in beginning and completing the daily assignment within one class period. Figure 3 shows that the percentage of assignments completed on a monthly basis increased steadily throughout the program. This data includes assignments which were completed during a class

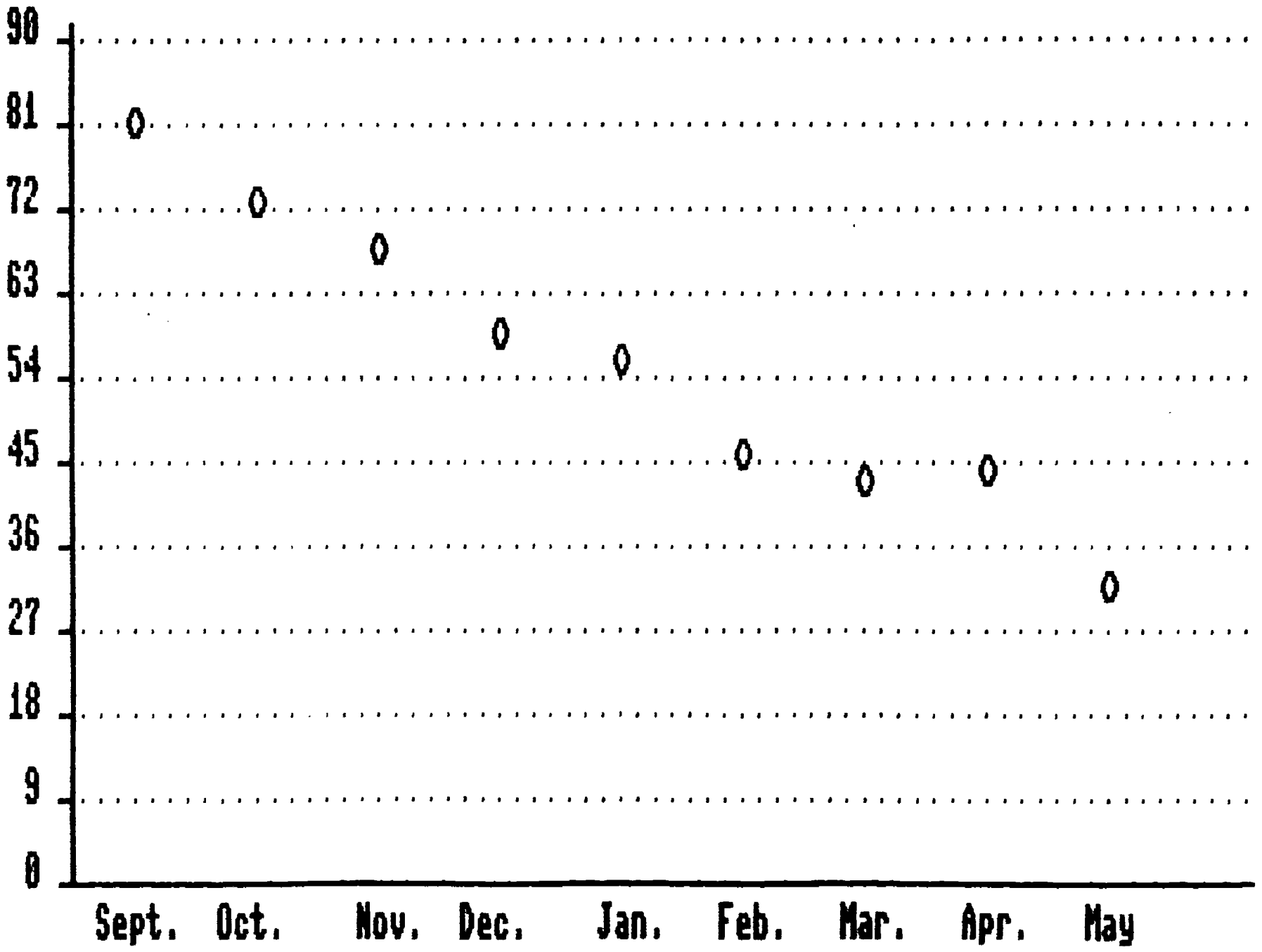


Figure 2- Number of Times Inappropriate Language Was Reported

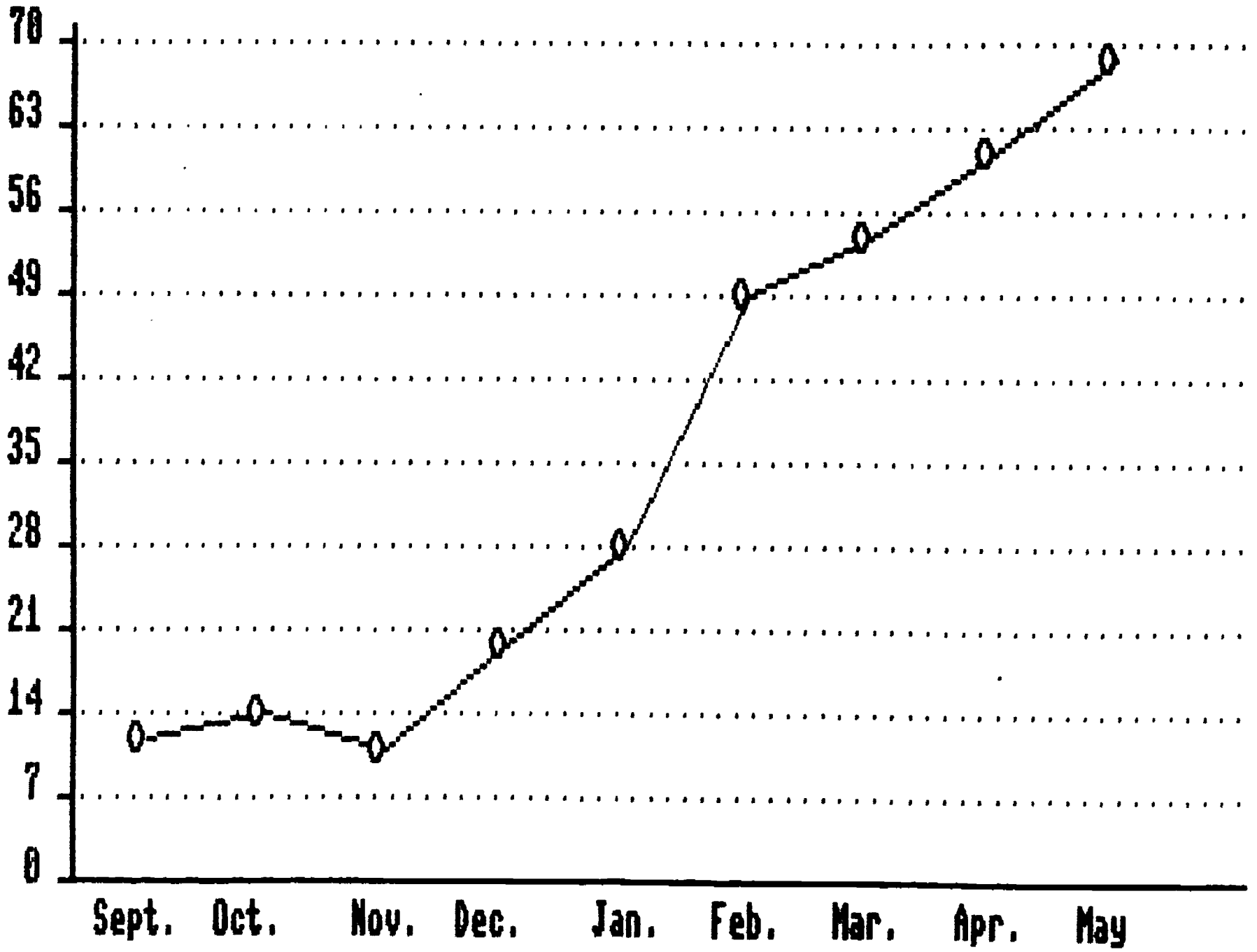
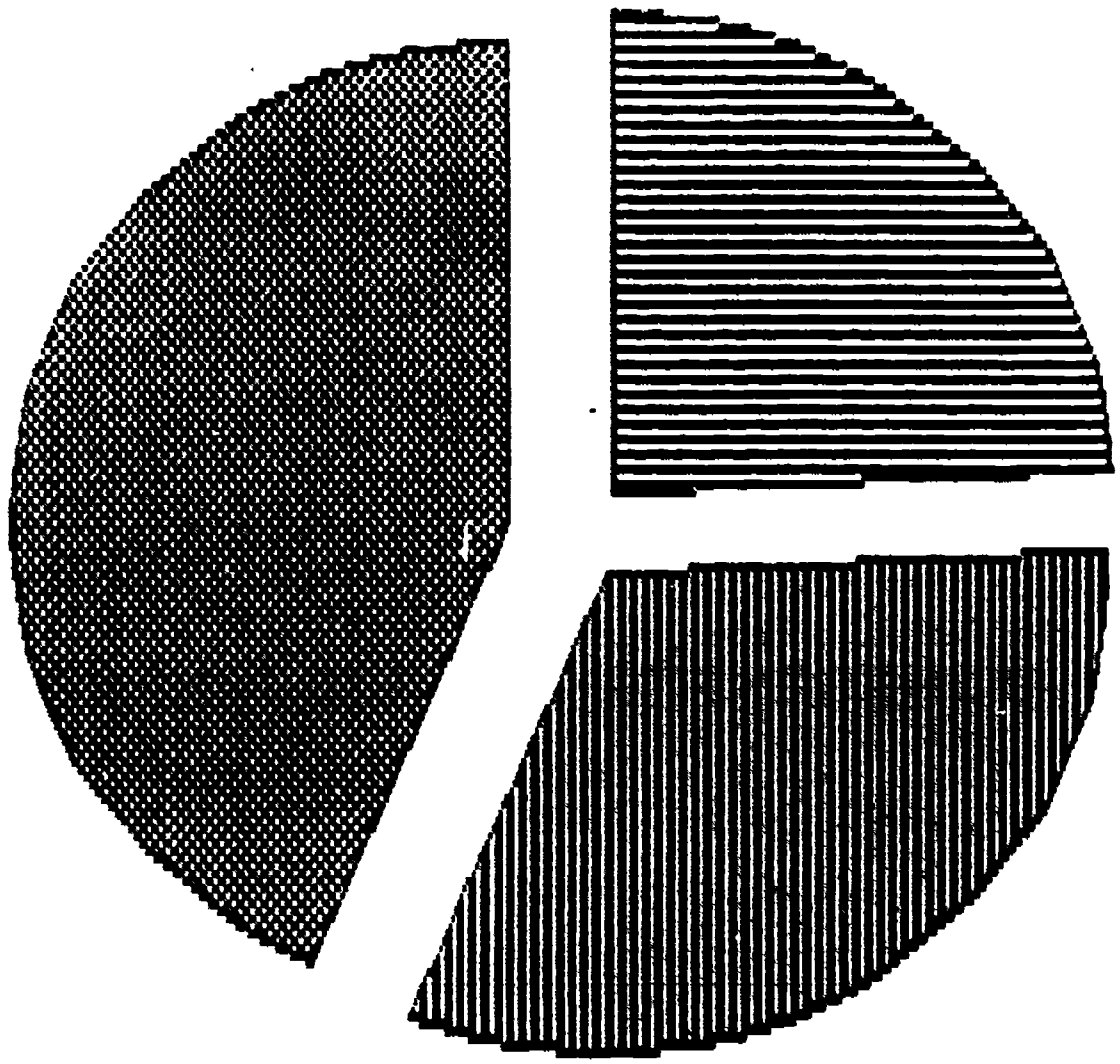


Figure 3– Class Assignments Completed During Program Implementation

period, and finished with a passing grade. This, of course, played an important role in increasing the students' nine week report card grade.

Figure 4 demonstrates that the students grades did increase steadily. The data indicates that there is a positive increase in academic performance between the first grading period and the last. Table 1 displays the actual number of each letter grade awarded during this program. An increase in the number of average to above average grades increased dramatically. The daily interaction of the peers was modified during the later part of the implementation so that a more accurate level of performance, as well as a level of student independence could be determined. Figure 5 shows the amount of time peers interacted with their respective students on a quarterly basis. It is important to note that peer-student interaction must be increased to a certain point and then decreased so that students can learn to work independently.

Students were allowed to contact their peers outside of their scheduled time. Peers gave students a copy of their schedule as well as their home phone numbers. Since one objective of this practicum was to get students to contact their peers independently, peers were asked to keep track of the number of times students contacted them. Figure 6 demonstrates that this goal was achieved early in the program and that it remained consistent from inception to completion.



24.0% Qtr. 2 6

32.0% Qtr. 3 8

44.0% Qtr. 4 11

Figure 4– Number of Students Improving Grades Per Quarter

TABLE 1

GRADES EARNED PER QUARTER

GRADE	A	B	C	D	F
Qtr. 1	0	3	17	24	12
Qtr. 2	2	14	27	8	5
Qtr. 3	3	17	22	10	4
Qtr. 4	7	24	27	6	2

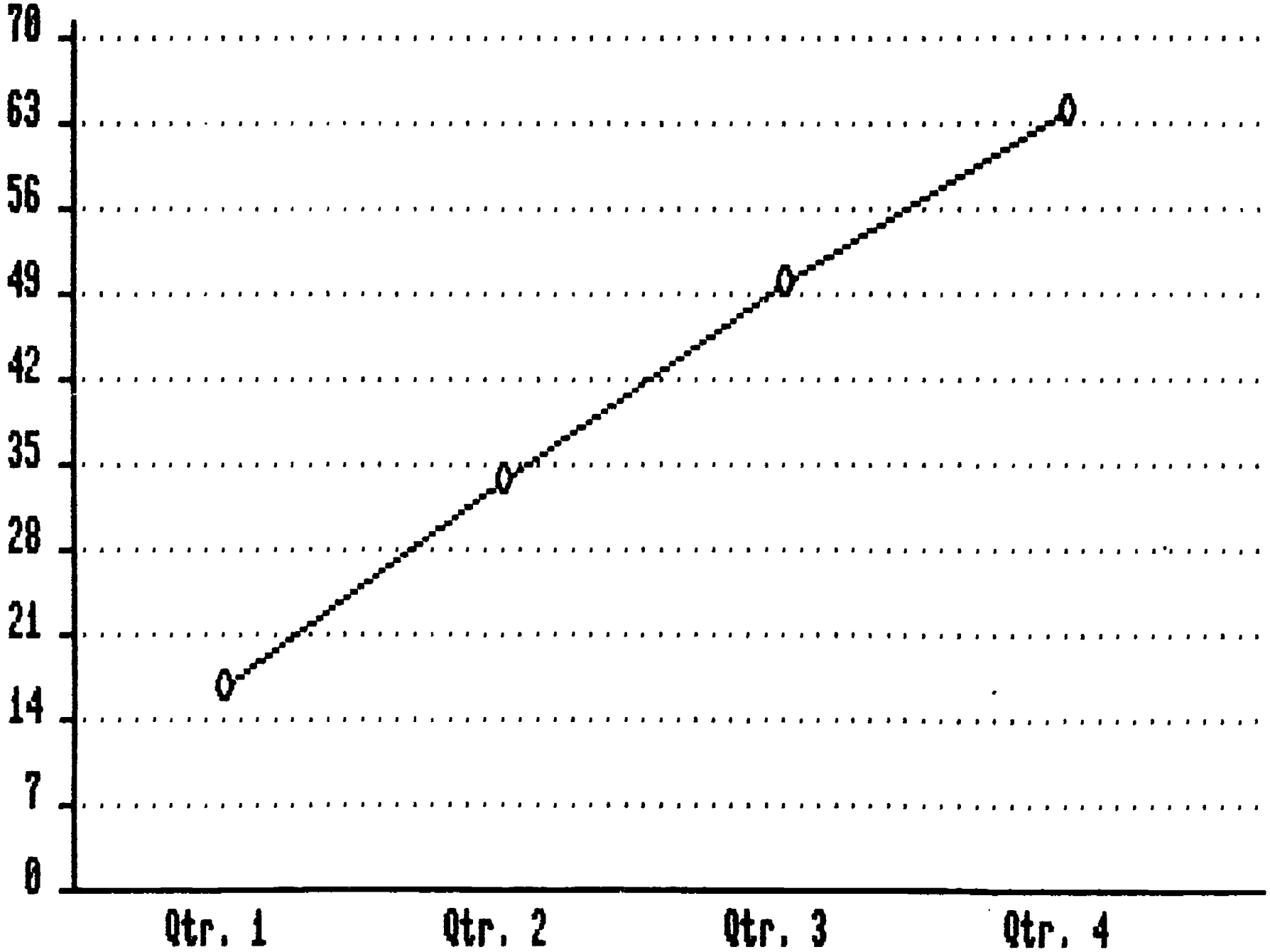


Figure 5- Number of Times Peers/Students Interacted

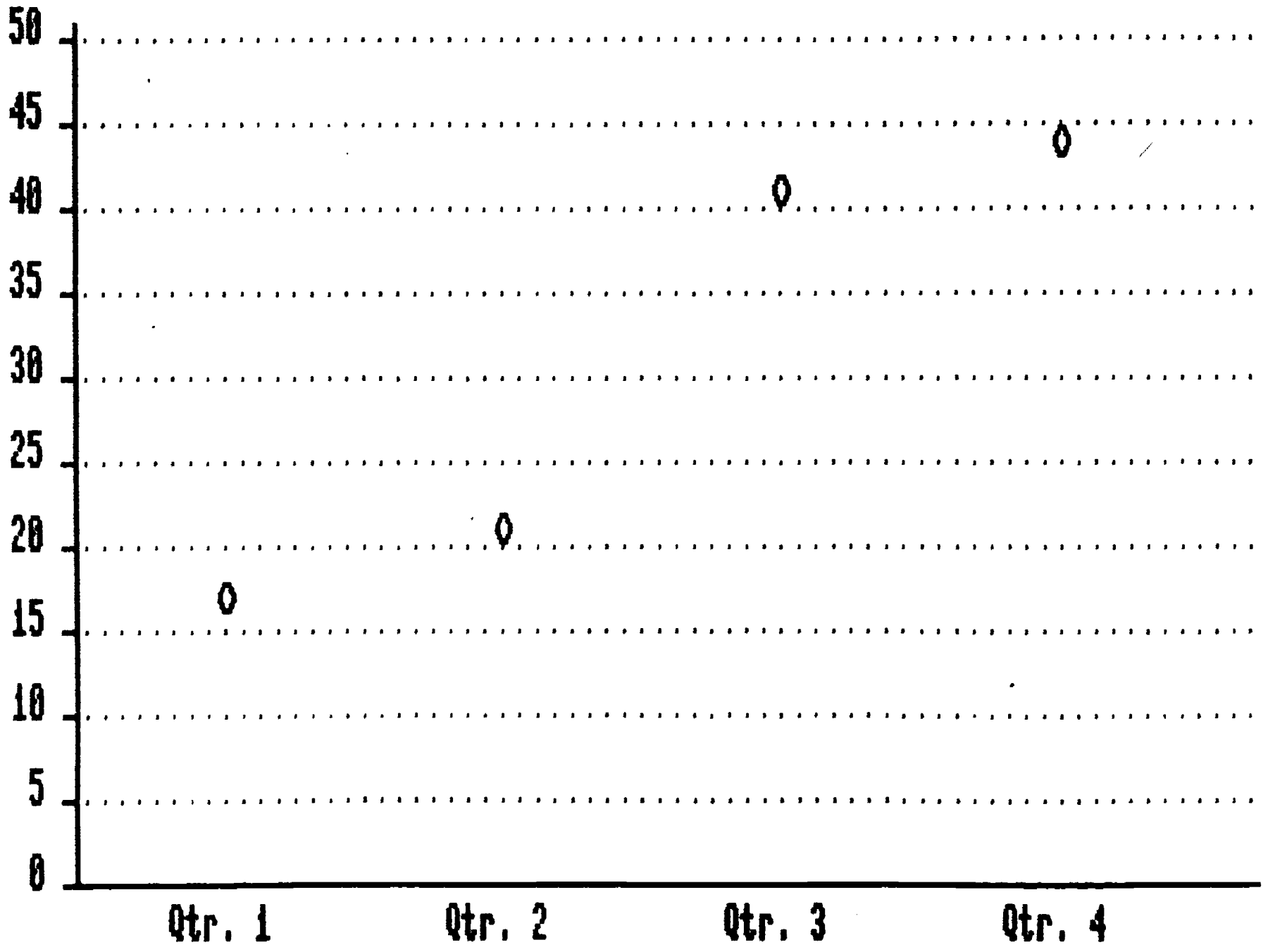


Figure 6- Number of Times Students Contacted Peers Independently

A comparison of positive behaviors and negative behaviors was completed. Figure 7 indicates that a large number of negative behaviors were exhibited early in the program. These behaviors decreased during each month of the program and were replaced by more positive actions.

Student referrals were tabulated and recorded. Since many ESE students are sent to the dean for disciplinary action, it was important to keep track as to how the number of referrals changed. Referrals from ESE and regular teachers were tallied and a monthly comparison of the total number of referrals written was kept. Figure 8 shows that the number of referrals written for each student decreased steadily from implementation to conclusion. Since many students were suspended from school for disciplinary reasons, these missed days were not tabulated in the attendance figures reported earlier. It was hoped that the number of disciplinary actions from administrators could be decreased through this program. This clearly was demonstrated.

Several peers left the program for a sundry of reasons. One peer stopped reporting and when asked by the program manager for reasons, the peer responded that he was no longer interested in working with ESE students. It was felt that these students could not be helped and the peer was too involved in extra curricular activities to devote sufficient time to the program.

Another peer needed surgery and was placed on homebound

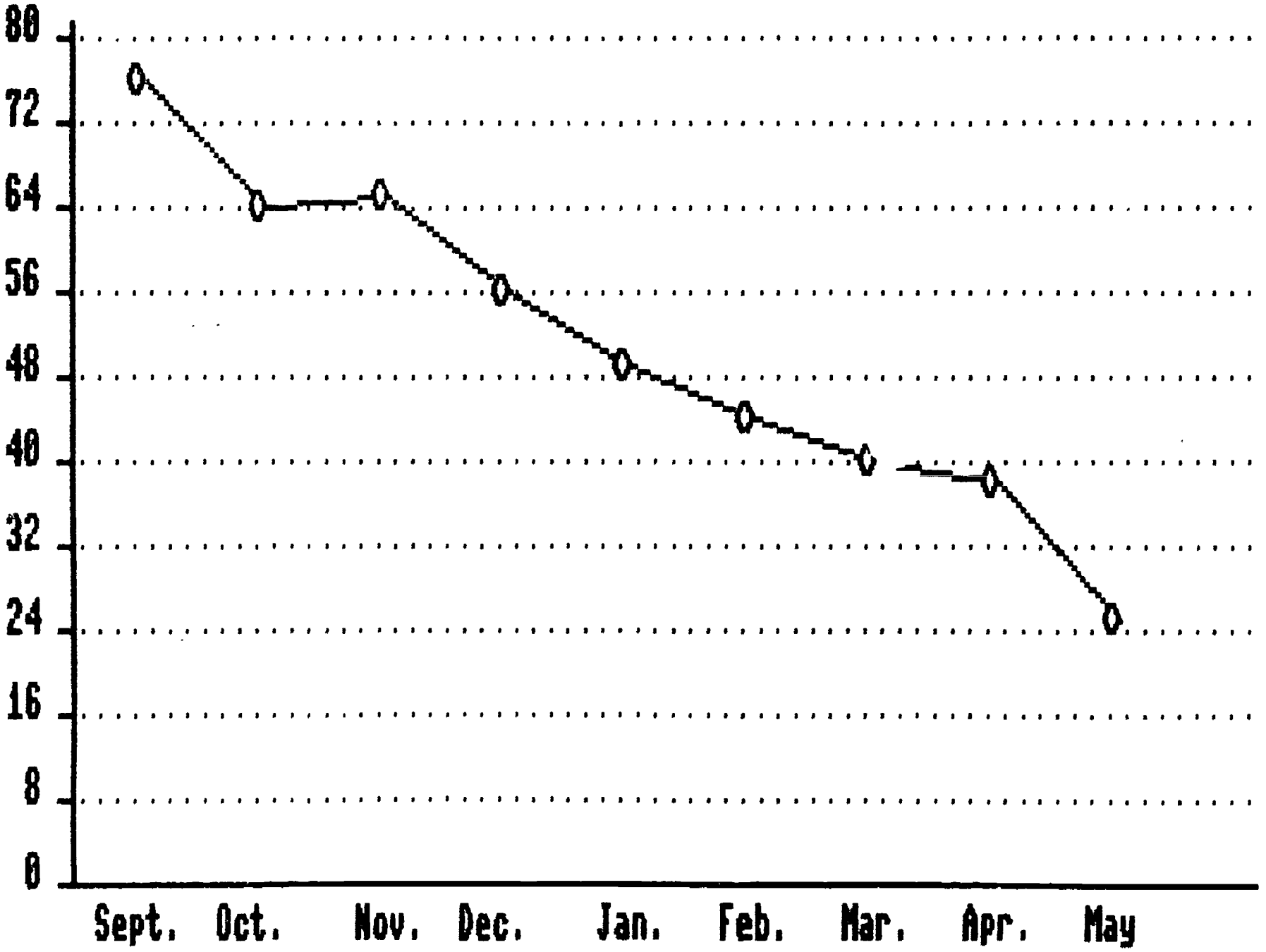


Figure 7- Number of Negative Behaviors Reported

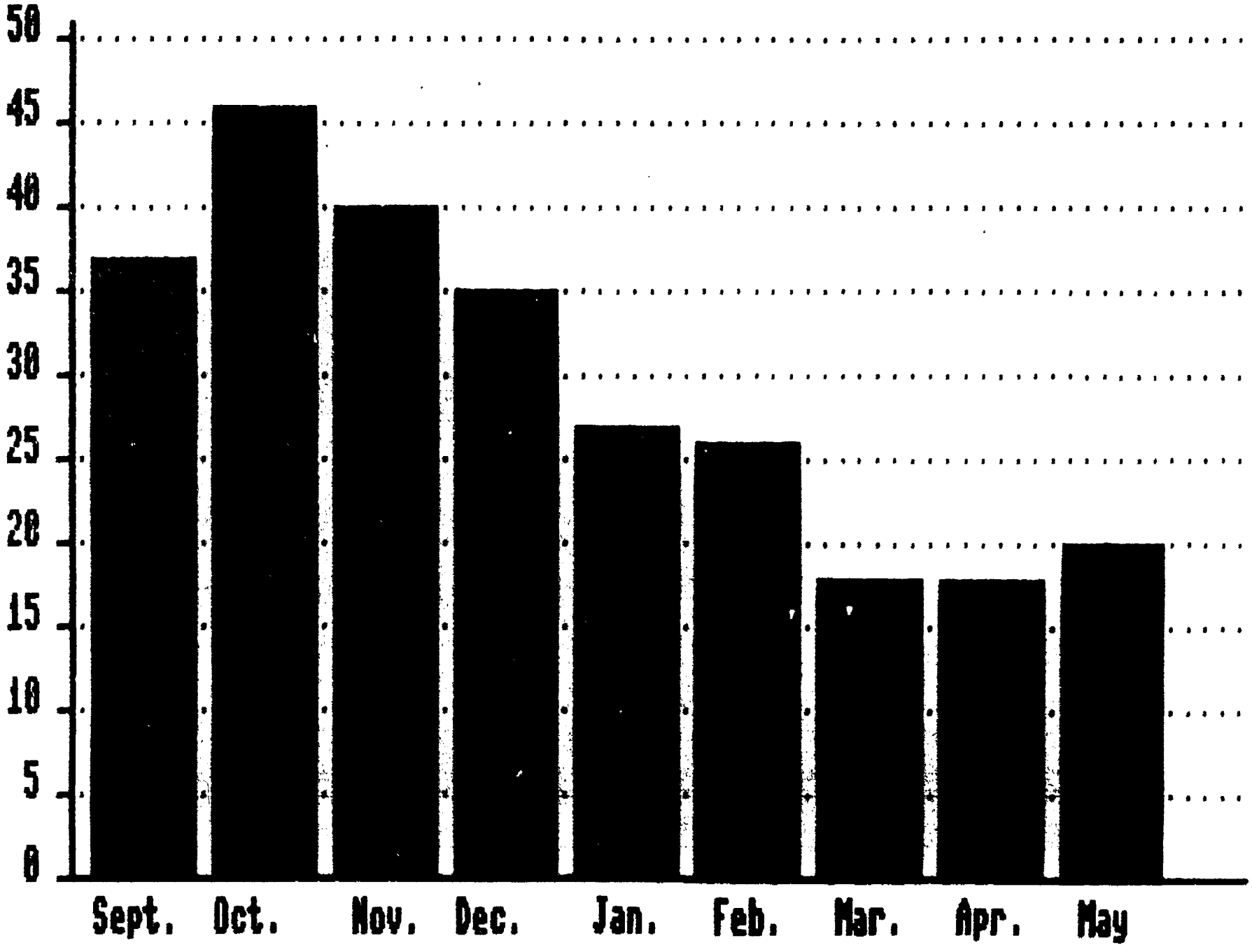


Figure 8- Number Of Discipline Referrals Written Each Month

services for the last four months of school. This peer was asked to separate from her student and to be certain to let the student know that her leaving was in no way caused by him. This was a difficult situation, since the student had recently lost both parents and was living with a sister. This student had expressed a fear of being deserted. The peer was trained to deal with this issue from the beginning of the year and the student was given time to adjust to the termination of the relationship. Although the student was disappointed, he appeared to handle this situation effectively. Therefore, similar techniques for separation were taught to other peers by the end of the program.

One peer was killed only two weeks before the end of school. The student she worked with was abandoned and placed in a state home. The director of the home adopted this student when he was twelve and attempted to develop an effective relationship with this young man. The death of the peer created an unexpected turn of events for the program. Other peers worked with the student and accompanied him to the peer's funeral. The support system between peers and students became an important part of the success of the program.

One student involved in the program ran away from home at the program's midpoint. The peer who was assigned to this student was given another student to work with until the original young man returned. The young man returned for a day, started a building on fire and was permanently

removed from school. Since this occurred early in the program, data from this student was not included in the results of this report.

Results of this practicum were positive. Students gained many important skills necessary for school success and demonstrated increases in all the stated objectives. The school administration indicated that they wanted to continue this program for the following academic year. It was also suggested that this program expand to involve more peers and reach more students at risk.

Conclusions

The objectives of the practicum were successfully met. Both peers and students were able to overcome unexpected obstacles and continue to achieve success. The use of peers was an important part of this success.

The use of community resources and speakers to assist in the training of peers played an important part in assisting peers to gain requisite skills. The strategies peers gained during the year were most important in the achievement of success. The speakers utilized were well trained and demonstrated their expertise in delivering their respective models.

The nomenclature indicates that peer assisted

instruction is a viable approach for increasing academic performance and competencies of students, especially those enrolled in ESE classes. The results of this practicum clearly supports that contention and the use of peer assistors can greatly enhance the academic and affective achievement levels of students. The match up of peers and students also appeared to have a positive effect on the program's results.

It is important to note that student-peer matchups must be given careful and thorough consideration. There was no need to reassign a peer or a student since a lugubrious effort to match peers to students was made early in the program. This was an integral part of the program's success.

Motivation is a key element of this program. Many ESE students are uninterested in school and do not care about success. Therefore, the use of peer assistors can aid the student in re-examining the educational needs and intentions for the future. This role model is a direct method for changing undesirable behavior that some students may possess.

The success of this program can be attributed to the total spectrum of school involvement. The personal motivational level of the peers as well as the desire of some ESE students to learn blend together to bring forth personal growth and development. Without this positive interaction from all parties, this program could not be as

successful as this particular one was.

Recommendations

There are several recommendations to strengthen this program:

1. Insist that peers attend meetings regularly. This time is important to share experiences and update peers about important events. It may be necessary to mandate these meetings and possibly remove peers from the program who are not in compliance.

2. Develop scheduling and implementation earlier in the year. Beginning this program at the start of school would increase the levels of success earlier and maintain skills more effectively.

3. Utilize community services more readily. Schedule speakers and trainers prior to the beginning of school. Peers would be able to begin the year with a more solid background and make them more knowledgeable about how to approach all situations which may be encountered.

4. List more unexpected events. Be prepared to deal with a litany of issues which may affect either the peer or student.

5. Expand the program as needed. Create a waiting list of students who may benefit from this program and involve them as soon as a space is available.

6. Define a policy regarding students who leave school for any reason. Stipulate that after a certain number of days absent, a student will be dropped from the program and the peer will be assigned to a new student.

7. Continuously evaluate the selection and matching process. Since this may be the primary area that measures success, refinement of this area is important to assure the success of the program and the objectives.

Dissemination

At the time the report was written, the author had applied to present the results at a county wide institute. At the request of the principal, a newspaper columnist was going to do an article relative to this particular program. Several administrators from other school requested that this program be presented at their centers so that it may possibly be implemented there.

Plans for future dissemination include submitting the results to journals as well as developing this practicum into an inservice presentation for other school districts. The results of this practicum were scheduled to be presented before the entire faculty where this program took place. Other possible areas for dissemination are under consideration.

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APPENDIX A

Developing Effective Relationships Survey

Appendix A

DEVELOPING EFFECTIVE PEER RELATIONSHIPS

How would you like to be included in school activities?

Have you ever felt that you were accepted by other students in this school?

When you are in the cafeteria, who do you sit with?

Do you talk with anyone from school when you are home? Who?

When you are in another class, where do you usually sit?

When you have to work in a group in another class, how do you feel?

Are you ever picked for a group or does the teacher put you into one?

If you could change one thing about your personal interactions, what would it be?

Please define what you consider to be an effective relationship with a friend?

APPENDIX B

TEACHER ATTITUDE SURVEY

Appendix B

Teacher Attitude Survey

Dear Colleague,

The students named below, members of the program for the emotionally handicapped, have been enrolled in your class during this past year. Please take a few minutes and answer the following questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. How do the students in your classes react to having ESE, particularly, E.H. students in your classroom/

2. Do the other students readily accept the E.H. students as class members or are they "lost in the crowd"?

3. How many times have you written a referral in your classes, for any student, during the past month?

4. Of this total, how many referrals were written for E.H. students?

5. Do the E.H. students initiate any negative behavior in class, or are they provoked by another student or a behavior of another student?

6. Do the E.H. students ever express concerns regarding the way they are treated by other students directly to you?

7. Do any of your regular students ever refer to the E.H. students as retarded?

APPENDIX C

REGULAR ENGLISH CLASS SURVEY

Appendix C

Regular English Class Survey

Please answer each question below. Thank you.

Have you ever assisted any students in the exceptional student education program?

Which students? At what times? How often?

Do you personally know any students in the program for the learning disabled?

Do you personally know any students in the program for the emotionally handicapped?

Do you personally know any students in the program for the gifted?

What type of student do you think is enrolled in the program for the learning disabled?

What type of student do you think is enrolled in the program for the emotionally handicapped?

What type of student do you think is enrolled in the program for the gifted?

How often do you interact with any of the above students?

APPENDIX D

LEADERSHIP CLASS SURVEY

Appendix D

Leadership Class Survey

Please answer the following questions.

Have you ever participated in planning any activities for the students enrolled in the program for the mentally retarded?

Do you know any students who are enrolled in the program for the learning disabled?

Do you know any students who are enrolled in the program for the emotionally handicapped?

Why do you think that students are placed in these programs?

Name the teachers who teach these classes.

Do you know the room numbers where these classes are held?

APPENDIX E

ATTENDANCE/SUSPENSION CHECKLIST FOR EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Appendix E

ATTENDANCE/SUSPENSION RECORD FOR EMOTIONALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

Symbol: U=unexcused absence E=excused absence
S=suspension (out of school) O=suspension (in-school)

APPENDIX F

PEER ASSISTOR RECOMMENDATION FORM

Appendix F

Peer Assistor Recommendation Form

Name:	Date:	Grade:
Home phone:	Address:	City:
After-school activities:	Awards:	
Grade Point Average:	Credits completed:	

Dear Teacher:

The above named student has applied or been recommended to participate in the school-wide peer assistance team program. Please objectively answer each question below regarding the above named student.

How long have you known this student?

Please describe the students communication skills in class.

Please describe the students academic achievement in your class. What is the student's grade to date?

Please write your observations related to the students interactions with peers.

What percentage of homework assigned does the student complete?

What percentage of tests has the student earned a grade above c+ on?

What positive, exceptional qualities does this student possess?

What areas could this student improve on?

Do you recommend this student as a role model when working with students enrolled in the program for the emotionally handicapped?

If no, why?

Any other comments?

Signature

Date

APPENDIX G

PEER ASSISTOR INVENTORY

Appendix G

Peer Assistor Inventory

What is your favorite subject?

What is your least favorite subject?

Please describe your long term goals?

What relevance do you feel a high school diploma has?

What after-school activities do you enjoy doing?

PLEASE COMPLETE THE STATEMENTS BELOW:

A peer tutor should

Homework is

When I get home from school I

When I see another student in school eating alone I

Special Education is

When I see a student being taken to the dean for misbehaving I
The last time I went to the administrative annex, it was for

Communication is

Making friends means

My best friend is

When I meet new people I

My favorite kind of person is one who

A person who I do not find interesting is one who

When I have an assignment I do not find interesting I

My favorite teacher is one who

A fellow student who is enrolled in a program for the emotionally handicapped is one who

APPENDIX H

PEER ASSISTOR OBSERVATION FORM

Appendix H
Peer Assistor Observation Form

Peer Assistor: Student:

Week of: Objective:

OBSERVATIONS

Monday

Contact made:

Time:

Place:

Purpose:

Tuesday

Contact made:

Time:

Place:

Purpose:

Wednesday

Contact made:

Time:

Place:

Purpose:

Thursday

Contact made:

Time:

Place:

Purpose:

Friday

Contact made:

Time:

Place:

APPENDIX I

BEHAVIORAL OBSERVATION FORM

Appendix I

Behavioral Observation Form

Peer Assistor: Name:

Week Of: Objective:

Please list each time one of the following behaviors have been observed this week.

Student smiled

You praised student for completing satisfactory work

Student sought you out after interaction in class

Student requested your assistance more often

Student began to work upon your request and continued for remainder of period

Student was cooperative and alert

Student achieved goal before the end of week

Student was in school and supplied, ready to work

Student began communicating immediately and was eager to discuss issues related to their personal life

Student statements were positive.

Total Number of Positive Behaviors Observed This Week

Total number of Positive Behaviors observed Last Week

Percent of increase or decrease

Days student was absent this week

Days student was absent last week

Percentage of increase of decrease

APPENDIX J

TEACHER OBSERVATIONS/CHECKLISTS

Appendix J

Teacher Observation/Checklist

Student: **Date:**

Class: **Teacher:**

How many days has this student been absent this month?
How many days were excused, unexcused, or suspensions?

Please list the total amount of homework assignmen' s made.

How many did the student complete?

What is the students homework average this month?

What is the students test average for the month?

Was the student referred for discipline this month?
If so, why?

Has the student interacted with any other student in your class, either positively or negat!vely? Please describe in detail.

Have you noticed any changes in the students attitude toward peers in class or academic achievement. Please describe.

Has the student spoken to you individually?

Has the student communicated anything regarding their involvement in the peer assistance program or about their peer? If so, please identify if the remark was positive or negative. It is not necessary to describe the comment in detail.

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BEFORE THE LAST DAY OF THE MONTH.

_____ _____

Signature Date

APPENDIX K

TEACHER CHECKLIST INDICATING IMPROVED INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

APPENDIX K

TEACHER CHECKLIST
INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS

(Name of student) is participating in the peer assistance program this semester. Please try to observe the following behaviors daily and indicate their occurrence in the appropriate column by using checkmarks. Thank you for your assistance

Student Week of

I. FACIAL

1. smiles
2. eye contact with other students
3. head held up
4. focuses on others
5. looks ahead
6. has eye contact with other students when communicating

II. BODY

1. enters room standing erect
2. walks in room in an acceptable way
3. appears confident
4. appears relaxed around others

III. COMMUNICATION

1. initiates conversations with other students
2. seeks out other students for advice
3. attempts to become member of group

4. asks relevant questions in class

5. accepted by peers

6. other students initiate contact

7. accepts responsibility for class participation

8. handles conflict appropriately

9. supports classroom environment in a positive manner

Please use the space below to list any other areas of effective behavior you observed this week.

APPENDIX L

SOCIAL/PERSONAL TEACHER CHECKLIST

APPENDIX L

SOCIAL/PERSONAL TEACHER CHECKLIST

(Name of student) has listed (name of strength) as an area he/she would like to develop further. Please list all positive and negative behaviors related to this particular behavior you have observed during the past week. Your input is vital to the success of this program. Thank you for your assistance.

Student Specific Behavior Week of

POSITIVE BEHAVIORS OBSERVED	NEGATIVE BEHAVIORS OBSERVED
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Please list any relevant comments below.

APPENDIX N

CALENDAR PLAN

APPENDIX N

CALENDAR PLAN

The life of this practicum was ten months. Activities prior to school were included in this time frame. Strategies for each month of this plan are listed below. It is important to remember that changes and modifications were made as needed and are documented below:

Pre-School:

-Peer assistors will be selected.

-Interest inventories and academic strengths will be compiled.

-Peer assistors will attend two training sessions. One will relate to communication while the other addresses remedial strategies for academics.

-Peers will role-play specific situations and critique their results.

-Peers will be acquainted with the form they must complete weekly.

-Peers will be given a list of their responsibilities including days they are to work with ESE students.

-Peers will be told to report to the program manager the first day of school to obtain the name of the student they will work with and the days and times they are expected to work with this student.

Month One:

-Develop folders for each student.

-Peer assistors will report first day of school.

-Peer assistors will meet their student.

-Peer assistors will interact with their student to establish rapport and interests the first week.

-Peer assistors will document observations and interactions with their student.

-Students will write their reactions to the first week of interaction with their peer assistor.

-Peer assistors will meet with program manager each Wednesday and report results and observations.

-Peer assistors will, in consultation with program manager, develop a skill to review and remediate for each week. This will be completed no later than noon Friday of each week.

-Peer assistor will complete and turn in a chart documenting results for the week.

-Regular teachers will be made aware of program and will complete checklist before last school day of month.

-Curriculum will focus on improving self-image.

Month Two:

-Peer assistors will experience 75% success with

skills and objectives attempted during first month.

-Data will be tallied and documented for first month.

-Peer assistors will incorporate social/personal skills related to self-concept from curriculum presented during first month.

-Peer assistors will meet with program manager every Thursday to discuss results and observations.

-Peer assistors will document and chart results achieved on a weekly basis.

-Peer assistors will complete goals and objectives targeted for each consecutive week in consultation with program manager prior to the week of implementation.

-Regular teachers will complete reports indicating academic achievement and social/personal observations for second month.

-Students will write in their diaries the achievements they feel they have made during this time period.

-Curriculum will continue to focus on improving self-image.

Month Three:

-End of first academic quarter.

-Tally results for first quarter to compare to future quarters.

-Meet with peer assistors every Thursday to review

progress and accomplishments. Group discussion of strategies will take place.

-Peer assistors will chart and document results on a weekly basis.

-Peer assistors will develop weekly goals and objectives for students no later than the Friday before the week they will implement. The progrem manager will review this plan and make changes as needed.

-Students will write a paragraph describing the academic success they feel they have achieved as well as a paragraph describing the changes in social/personal accomplishments during the month.

-Monthly results will be tallied and documented.

-Regular teachers will report results of academic achievements and social/personal interactions before last school day of the month.

-Curriculum will continue to focus on self-image.

Month Four:

-Tally results for previous month.

-Meet with peer assistors every Thursday to discuss achievements and results.

-Inform peer assistors that they need to review study skills in preparation for semester exams next month.

Peer assistors will be expected to help students prepare for exams.

-Peer assistors will develop weekly strategies and goals for students, present the plan to the program manager for review the Friday before the week implementation will take place.

-Peer assistors will report, in writing, any changes they have observed in the behavior, interaction or attitude of student.

-Regular teachers will be asked to report academic achievement and social/personal observations to program manager.

-Curriculum will include self-image as well as test-taking strategies.

Month Five:

-Tally and record results for previous month.

-Meet with peer assistors each Thursday to discuss results and observations.

-Peer assistors will develop goals and strategies for following week the Friday before. This plan is to be reviewed by program manager. Suggestions for fine-tuning plan will be made.

-Require peer assistors to prepare students for semester exams late this month.

-Request regular teachers to complete checklists documenting academic achievement and social/personal

observations.

-Peer assistors will complete checklists weekly and write observations related to students' behavior, attitude and communication.

-Students will write a paragraph describing changes in achievement and social/personal behavior during the past month.

-Curriculum will focus on self-image and test taking strategies.

Month Six:

-End of second academic quarter. End of first semester.

-Tally results for previous month as well as second quarter. Compare results from first quarter and second quarter.

-If necessary, change peer assistors and students. Consider switching all peers and students.

-Meet with peer assistors each Thursday to discuss results and observations.

-If second semester teachers have changed, notify new ones that students are involved in this program.

-Request that regular teachers complete checklists related to achievement and social/personal observations prior to the last school day of the month.

-Peer assistors will develop a weekly plan for their student and present it to program manager the Friday before implementation. Program manager will review and suggest ways to target successful implementation.

-Students will write paragraphs identifying academic and social/personal achievements for each week.

-Curriculum will focus on effective communication skills while reviewing skills for developing a positive self-image.

Month Seven:

-Tally results for previous month.

-Meet with peer assistors each Thursday to discuss results and observations.

-Peer assistors will write objectives and list strategies to be implemented each week. This plan must be completed by the Friday before implementation. Peer manager will review plan and expect peer assistor to report on results of plan by the end of the week.

-Regular teachers will be asked to complete checklist for students indicating academic achievement and social/personal observations.

-Peer assistors will complete checklists weekly.

-Students will write paragraphs describing academic achievements and social/personal gains.

-Curriculum will focus on effective interpersonal communication.

Month Eight:

-End of third academic quarter. Compare results from previous quarters.

-Tally and record results for previous month.

-Meet with peer assistors each Thursday to discuss achievements and observations.

-Peer assistors will develop weekly plan and target goals and objectives for each week. Peer assistors will report results to program manager within one week after implementation.

-Regular teachers will be asked to complete checklist prior to the last school day of month.

-Peer assistors will tally month results.

-Students will write paragraphs indicating what academic achievements and social/personal skills they have mastered this month.

-Curriculum will focus on effective interpersonal communication.

Month Nine:

-Tally results from previous month.
-Review test taking strategies for peer assistors to review with students for semester exams next month.
-Discuss with peer assistors ways to seperate from students next month when progrsm ends.
-Meet with peer assistors each Thursday to discuss results and observations.
-Peer assistors will complete a plan indicating the goals and strategies to be attempted each week. Peer assistors will be expected to report results to program manager within one week following implementation.
-Regular teachers will be requested to complete checklist for student prior to the last school day of the month.
-Students will write and describe achievements and social/personal gains in paragraph form.
-Curriculum will cover interpersonal communication.

Month Ten:

-End of fourth academic quarter. End of second semester. End of school year. End of project.

-Tally results from previous month.

-Meet with peer assistors to be certain that they have started implementing effective ways to terminate with student.

-Be certain that peer assistors have prepared students for semester exams.

-Plan appreciation breakfast for peer assistors and students.

-Ask peer assistors to write a certificate of achievement for their student.

-Ask student to write a certificate of appreciation for peer.

-Meet with peer assistors to summarize results of implementation.

-Meet with peer assistors so that recommendations for future implementation can be made.

-Tally results for month. Compare quarterly results.

-Students will write paragraphs describing how effective this program has been academically and interpersonally. Ask for recommendations from students for future implementations.

-Tally results for report.

-Discuss with administration the feasibility of continuing program for next academic year.